



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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TIA P25 Meetings

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Representatives from Interoperability Montana and the State of Montana attended the quarterly face-to-face meeting of the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) TR-8 Mobile and Personal Private Radio Standards Committee held January 19-23. Both the State of Montana and IM have significant interest in the progress of key standards, including trunking, ISSI, vocoder standards and TDMA integration.

Each of these key standards impact future Project 25 standards, will have long-term impact on the IM Project and future technology interfaces. The State of Montana serves on several committees as a non-voting member. Information on all the TR-8 standards and committee developments may be found at <http://www.tiaonline.org/standards/committees/committee.cfm?comm=tr-8>

IM Technical Committee Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Interoperability Montana Technical Committee (IMTC) met in Helena on Mon., Jan. 26. IMTC Chair Bob McWilliams reported that the administrative committee reviewed and approved the technical aspects of a six-month Motorola Maintenance Proposal. Dale Osborne, Montana Highway Patrol (MHP), reported for the Encryption Sub-Committee, and indicated that the Dept. of Corrections will now be performing encryption functions internally. Dale reminded members that the IMTC has stated that encryption keys can only be held by bona-fide law enforcement agencies. Roger Hays, Lewis and Clark County, will serve as the clearinghouse for releasing the system key, and a form will be made up for users to requests it.

Roger Smith, MHP, provided an update on Network Design sub-committee activities, including several site walks. He reported that major headway has been made on connectivity to the far eastern sites of the Northern Tier. Kevin Bruski, IM Executive Director, said the IM is requiring background checks on all new hires, which will be required for anyone working on the IM network.

Scott Bradford, Frequency Sub-Committee Chair, reported on recent frequency approvals and highlighted issues that are being resolved. Dorothy Gremaux, Central Montana Dispatch Center, was named to head up the Dispatch Connectivity Sub-Committee, and additional committee members were suggested.

Members made a few more additions and corrections to the Five-Year Build-Out Plan, including the addition of an upgrade to the MHP dispatch center under future infrastructure. The committee officially took action to approve the document as amended. A Decision/Information Request (DIR) 122 to remobilize microwave crews to Fort Harrison also was approved.

Members spent considerable time reviewing the pros and cons of five newly identified locations for the Second Master Controller and decided to recommend to the IMPD the New Autovon site outside of Glendive as its first choice. The second choice is the Coburn Site near Billings. Mark Canton, Motorola, gave an update on technical specifications of the equipment needed for the second master controller and solicited input from the IMTC.

The next IMTC meeting will be Mon., Feb. 23, at the MACo offices in Helena, 2715 Skyway Drive, at 9:00 am.

Western Consortium Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Western Interoperability Communications Consortium (WICC) met in Polson on Tues., Jan. 27. Project Director George Gupton began the meeting with a discussion of the IM Sustainability Plan. Members recommended changes to Table 1 and asked for additional clarification on benefits to jurisdictions.

George reported on recent staffing sub-committee activities, and indicated that interviews have been conducted and offers extended to fill the two project manager positions and the system administrator position. The staffing sub-committee will be addressing personnel policies in the future. Currently, IM personnel are being hired via contracts.

Mark Denke, Sanders County, reported on the IM Technical Committee meeting, and indicated that it recommended a first- and second-place choice for the location of the second master controller. Jack Spillman, Kalispell Radio System Administrator, gave an update on the Northern Tier system, and said that licensing issues are being addressed. Stephen Stanley, Lake County OEM, reported that his county commissioners have adopted the plan that Northrop Grumman outlined for the county in the WICC Interoperability Needs Assessment; so they have an approach in mind for the next round of equipment purchases.

The next WICC meeting will be held at 10:00 am on Tues., Feb. 24 in Missoula.

Eastern Tier Consortium Meeting

By Dan Sullivan dsullivan@mt.gov

The Eastern Tier Interoperability Consortium (ETIC) meeting was held in Glendive on Wed., Jan. 28 and was well attended. Project Director Alan Michaels, Glendive Police Chief, gave the u IM Project Directors (IMPD) report, and indicating that a lot of work has been accomplished in the past several years and now the build-out is coming to the eastern tier. For example, the Deadman Butte site near Fort Peck is up and running so the microwave is now in place all the way from Libby to Culbertson. Work is taking place on NEPA paperwork so that infrastructure work can proceed in the spring.



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Chief Michaels introduced Kevin Bruski, IM Executive Director, to the group. Kevin talked about the IM Sustainability Plan and answered questions. The plan is being presented as a business plan to support the request for \$2 million from the Governor's budget. In addition, some \$87 million for interoperability projects has been identified in the Schweitzer Administration's proposed list of Montana "shovel-ready" projects for which federal economic stimulus dollars could be obligated quickly.

Butch Renders, Richland County, gave the IM Technical Committee (IMTC) report, announcing that the IMTC has recommended the new Autovon Site as its first-choice for the location of the second master controller. Members discussed the advantages of this site over four other proposed sites. Also, five-year technical build-out schedule was handed out. Kevin noted that a technician will need to be in the area to service the second master controller and meet the programming needs of eastern tier counties.

Pam Crisafulli, Dawson County, gave a report on the preparation of a FEMA Assistance to Fire Fighters grant and encouraged everyone to participate in the process. She also will be setting up a meeting with Ellsworth Air Force Base representatives this spring.

The next meeting of the ETIC will be on Wed., Feb. 25 beginning at 10:00 am at the Community Room of the Dawson County Courthouse, 207 West Bell, in Glendive.

Big Sky 11 Consortium Meeting

By Dan Sullivan dsullivan@mt.gov

Project Director Ed Auker called the Big Sky 11 consortium meeting to order in Billings on Thurs., Jan. 29. Twenty persons were in attendance, but a quorum of voting members was not present. The main meeting topic was the Sustainability Plan. Ed noted two goals of the plan: to provide a framework for how counties will participate in the operation and maintenance of the IM system, and, to enhance awareness within the state Legislature of the IM Project's long-range sustainability goals so that members will have confidence in the project. Kevin Bruski noted that the plan is a critical, living document that will be reviewed each year.

Concerns about the plan were discussed and questions were clarified. For example, Kevin Bruski noted that even though projected costs increase in the plan, they may also decrease after the build-out phase is complete. It was explained that counties will not pay fees until they are actually benefiting from being on the system. Another issue was whether counties or the IM should negotiate with cities in their jurisdictions for a portion of their membership fees.

Members also discussed whether the federal fee of three times the highest jurisdiction membership fee was too high, but DHS and FBI representatives thought the fee to their agencies was reasonable because they need state-wide coverage. It was noted that the IMPD is still working on an appeal process for jurisdictions where the assessment may be high, but the population low. Also, some estimated budget items will be replaced with more current and accurate figures once they are available. The group generally supported the Sustainability Plan, but wanted Ed to report their concerns to the IMPD.

Ed announced that he would like the group to consider a new project director for the IMPD, but no action was taken due to the lack of a quorum. The next meeting was tentatively set for Tues., Feb. 24 in Billings at the Fire Station.

Upcoming Meetings

Feb. 2

IM Project Directors Sustainability Plan Action
Conference Call • 10:30 - noon
Call-in and Pin # to be E-Mailed

Feb. 4

Long-Range Planning Committee Legislative Hearing
IM Funding Request
Helena • 8:00 am • Room 317, State Capitol
Pre-Planning Breakfast Meeting, Perkins, 1803 Cedar
Helena • 6:30 am

Feb. 5

Northern Tier Consortium (NTIC)
Havre • 9:00 am – noon
Great Northern Inn • 1345 1st St.

Feb. 9

IM Finance Committee
Helena • 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Anderson ZurMuehlen • 828 Great Northern Blvd.

Feb. 9

IM Governance Committee
Helena • Noon - 5:00 pm
Dept. of Corrections Annex • Behind 515 N. Sanders St.

Feb. 10

IM Project Directors (IMPD) Meeting
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
MACo Large Conference Rm., Lower Level
2715 Skyway Drive

Feb. 11

Central Montana Consortium (CMICC)
Great Falls • 10:00 am
Wheat Building • 750 6th Street S.W.

Feb. 11

South Central Montana Consortium (SCMIC)
White Sulphur Springs • 10:00 am
Sheriff's Training Center, 123 West Crawford